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RUYNAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
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INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 9394
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 1761
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 7561
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 9974
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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - NORTH KOREA

¶1. LEAD STORIES: Front-page items on Thursday morning included a White House statement urging Russia to cease its military operations in Georgia.

¶2. "Gesture Alone Will Not Be Accepted" The liberal Asahi editorialized (8/14): "The governments of Japan and the DPRK reached an agreement to reinvestigate the kidnapping of Japanese nationals.... The Japanese government welcomed the agreement as 'marking a certain amount of progress.' This is true in the sense that the door to a reinvestigation has been opened. However, we cannot be overly optimistic.... North Korea should fulfill its commitment. Its action should be substantive. The reinvestigation should not end up as a token gesture."

¶3. "Coordination Necessary before Delisting" The liberal Mainichi stated in an editorial (8/14): "...North Korea appears to have agreed to reinvestigate the abduction cases in an attempt to promptly realize the U.S. delisting of Pyongyang as a state sponsor of terrorism by demonstrating improvement in its relations with Japan.... When to delist North Korea is an issue for the U.S. to decide. However, it will be difficult to get the DPRK to take action without coordination and cooperation. In this regard, the U.S. and Japan need to strengthen their coordination on delisting and other issues."

¶4. "Japan Should Demand Thorough Reinvestigation" The moderate Yomiuri argued in an editorial (8/14): "...Japan should not allow North Korea to buy time by conducting an ambiguous investigation. It is important to have an investigation committee, one that is authorized by North Korea's leaders, take

responsibility and produce results by fall.... North Korea appears to have agreed to hold talks with Japan in view of the delay in its delisting. North Korea must not be allowed to use the reinvestigation to its own ends. The GOJ should reinforce multinational coordination and continue pressure on Pyongyang."

¶5. "Good Faith Reinvestigation Necessary" The business-oriented Nikkei editorialized (8/14): "...The ultimate purpose of the reinvestigation is to have all of the kidnap victims return home and to get a full explanation for the abductions.... Pyongyang agreed to hold talks with Tokyo in view of the U.S. reaction.... It is obvious that North Korea made the move to give Washington a good impression."

¶6. "Close Communication with U.S. Needed" The liberal Tokyo Shimbun contended in an editorial (8/14): "...North Korea will likely conduct the reinvestigation into the abduction cases in the goal of improving its ties with the U.S. and achieving delisting. Fortunately, President Bush has said that he will not make an easy concession regarding verification of North Korea's nuclear declaration.... The GOJ needs to have close communication with the USG in order to discuss the importance of U.S.-Japan relations and strict verification of North Korea's nuclear programs."

SCHIEFFER